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ADDRESS, TO THE SARATOGA CO. (N. Y.) MED. SOCIETY,

By Dr. M. L. North, President of the Society, at its Annual Meeting, May 26th, 1846.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

**GENTLEMEN:**—Although you committed both a mistake and a wrong, in my humble opinion, in selecting, at your last annual meeting, a man of my very infirm health for your presiding officer; yet, as the proceeding could not be corrected, I have attempted to manifest my gratitude for your choice, and my zeal for the cause of medicine, by sketching some considerations which I hope may be deemed appropriate to the occasion. In performing this duty, it is not my purpose to expatiate on the generalities of medical science. However inviting this field might be, I decline it, and call your attention to the *medical interests of Saratoga County*.

Here is a field so wide that the space to which I have limited myself, will allow me to render but impartial justice either to the subject or to this honorable body. To you, gentlemen, who have youth, and health, and activity, are consigned interests of the most responsible character. You cannot escape them if you would. The Legislature of New York, two years since, deliberately stripped you of all prescriptive rights or distinctions; but they have not taken away your employment. They admitted novices and the unlearned to all the privileges and immunities of yourselves; making them, like yourselves, accountable for gross ignorance and mal-practice, and entitling them to legal compensation.

But, we cannot suppose, for a moment, that a legislative act can enable these men to enter the chambers of the sick and dying with the same self-possession as yourselves. Ignorance, it is true, can make bold. But where there is a fragment of a conscience left, it would seem that it should render unsteady the nerve and blanch the face of him who assumes the weighty office of averting from the sick man the threatening approach of death, without a most thorough preparation for his work.

This difference, gentlemen, between you and the quack can never be obliterated. The Legislature can put you and him on the same level. They may say to the wide world, we give you perfect liberty to select your own doctors and methods of cure. This they have done; and we are glad of it, because there no longer attaches to us the *opprobrium* of being considered a privileged class. To be privileged—to be defended by law—to be fenced around—to be favorites in a republican country, is

most necessarily a withering blight, a mildew. We would none of it! Only let us proceed as we now do, with equal rights and a fair field, and nothing can jostle the regular practitioners from their supremacy.

True, with all our pains-taking and lengthened and anxious preparation, we may lose patients in a manner that seems much like want of skill. This is mortifying enough of itself. And should some one, whom we have considered, and may have pronounced an ignorant pretender, have patients recover side by side with ours, of apparently similar diseases, this would be still more liable to confound the public. The novice may, for awhile, triumph. He may boast his own fame, and your ill success.

But there are many in every town in Saratoga county who know the difference between a recovery and a cure. They are acquainted with the *known* tendencies of the animal frame to throw off disease, and that these often come to the aid of both regulars and irregulars in the treatment of severe cases. And yet, in the course of years, they become acquainted with many instances where the system responds so promptly to the administration of bold and skilful measures, that they have no doubt of the efficacy of your treatment. It is on this free, unbiased and long-extended observation, by the public, gentlemen, that you are most confidently to rely. Will not man universally employ a gardener who has served his seven years in Europe, in preference to him who has served his month here? Will not men universally send a watch to a watch-smith instead of a tinker? Will not men universally prefer a lawyer who has worked years indefatigably in the perplexities of law, to a novice?

The great reason, gentlemen, why the regular physicians are to have permanently the principal business, is that, in their course of training, they become philosophers. This is true, even now, and will be vastly more so soon, if we have not greatly overrated the importance of the late National Medical Convention in New York. Medical men must *closely scrutinize cause and effect*. This is philosophy. In this consists the great difference between practitioners. Thirty years ago it was the inquiry—what said my preceptor? What say my authors? the prescription being implicitly adopted because in the book or among the recipes. How different now, when every one is on the watch, bringing all his powers to the untiring observation of the effects of the remedies? A man of this stamp is not so bigoted as to treat with contempt *any* new mode of medication that does not come from legitimate authority, nor so credulous as to endorse whatever new scheme may, for a season, catch the popular breeze and bid fair to have its run. In this way, while his mind is open eagerly to grasp every substantial improvement, he spurns the mortification of advocating and adopting plans that are in themselves visionary and worthless.

In discussing, gentlemen, the medical interests of this county, I assume, without any misgiving, though my feeble health has prevented my verifying this assumption, that a very large proportion of the medical practitioners are unceasingly laboring to advance the honor of the whole

of our fraternity. There must be a respectable number, who, while they are striving primarily for their own interests, are generously seeking to exalt and promote the benefit of the whole.

Under the full belief that this policy is general, both in this meeting and the county, I proceed to say that, in order to carry out this principle, and to have each man do his share in the advancement, let there be,

*1st. A general and punctual attendance on our annual meeting.*

I do not know your precise sentiments; but, since the act of May 6, 1844, which rendered our county meetings nugatory, and the matter of licenses and diplomas a mere formality, I have felt that it is more than ever imperative upon us to pay a punctual regard to our county assemblies. We have now a better, a more approved basis of membership. It is that of fraternal association. Our rules and by-laws we adopt so far, and so far only, as will guide us in our fraternal enterprise. And I love this freedom from bonds. In all the medical associations to which I have formerly belonged, I have thought there was too much attention paid to rules. I would have as little time as possible consumed in the election of officers, admission of members and adjusting rules and precedents, and nearly the whole time in medical discussion. There is one simple and practical arrangement that might be adopted which would insure the dissemination of much useful knowledge without any trouble to the members.

Let the meeting be opened early, and let each member be called upon for one single case that may have occurred in his own practice during the current year, which he may communicate either in a verbal or written form. You perceive at a glance how easily it could be accomplished, and how much it would attract the members from year to year. Very probably this may have been tried here; but if so, it could never have been abandoned for want of practical usefulness. It would add to the knowledge of us all, show the skill of each brother, and go far towards furnishing the prevailing diseases of the county. If the narrations were brief, the whole Society could be heard, and, with the annual address, it would form an impulse to an annual gathering of no ordinary power. This would tend to promote mutual acquaintance, which is expansive, cheering, a bright spot in your monotonous rounds, and can scarcely be enjoyed except at the county meeting.

*2d. I would suggest, in the second place, the publishing occasionally in our county papers, the names and residence of all the regular physicians of the Society.* This is done by the Albany and Troy papers, and they convey matter that is undoubtedly read with interest by the common people. It would not only furnish these latter with the names of their own professional neighbors, but would make each member of the faculty acquainted with the address and number of all his brethren throughout the county.

*3d. My third suggestion for the improvement of our medical faculty is the practice during the winter of anatomical dissections.* But "how can this be done?" you may ask—would it not be worth our whole practice and property—nay, our life—to have it known that we have a subject? The following facts will form my answer to the supposed inquiry. On my visit to the valley of the Mississippi last autumn, I called

on a physician, a stranger to me, for whom I had imbibed a high respect from a dissertation of his in a medical journal, throwing light on an intricate and dangerous disease, by some original anatomical dissections. I found him all that I expected, indefatigably devoted to his profession, attending to all its branches, and, at the same time, carrying on anatomical dissections every winter. On inquiring how this could be done without disturbing his friends, he took me into his attic and showed me a regular dissecting table and apparatus, and the usual sky-light. "The neighbors all know this," said he; "I regularly, each autumn, send to the metropolis, by the regular express on the rail road, for a subject. It is brought here by the cars in open day, and unloaded and carried into my chamber, like other articles of commerce. This proceeding, instead of alarming my friends, wholly pacifies them. They see I have no occasion for robbing the grave. In the course of a few years, many of these citizens have attended evening courses of dissections in this room, and my practice is universally approved." He showed me the very specimens of diseased intestines which had furnished the article for the journal alluded to.

Now, I ask, are there not a respectable number of yourselves, gentlemen, whose employers would commend your faithfulness to them and the public, by your undergoing the labor and expense of an occasional course of dissections effected in a similar manner? I feel no doubt of it, and that you would receive not only their gratitude for your thorough efforts to serve them, but attendance and pecuniary co-operation.

4th. My next suggestion to this Society is, *that we say but little about quacks.* I do not deny that you have much to do with them. Take any twenty of the regular newspapers of city or country, and more than half of the standing, paid advertisements are from quacks and nostrum venders. Quackery stares out everywhere upon you: on the corners of our streets, on the trees of the forest, engraved on the walks you tread, in steamers, cars, bar-rooms; nay, it has got access to our churches! These countless and noisy proclaimers of their own wonders are not confined to insulate quacks and pretenders. They go in schools, succeeding each other in rapid and astounding frequency. These things will ever be. But you may safely expect that no medical school or sect will long survive the man who invented and gave currency to the scheme. I defy you to adduce a theory yet popular and commanding, whose author has been long dead. The reason is, there are and will be on hand, side by side with the innovators, a set of regularly-trained men, who stand prepared for employment when the public becomes weary of extra, and often imaginary, modes of healing. If our men had more flexibility, more shrewdness, they would very speedily render unnecessary an extra set of practitioners, by winnowing out from the chaff what little wheat there may be—and there is and always will be some in every scheme—and appropriating it to advance their own skill. I have seen, years and years, a certain portion of my medical friends manifest an appearance that they have nothing more to do with any new-fangled scheme, than to screw themselves up into an attitude of great contempt and pronounce the word "humbug!" nothing more, unless to degrade themselves

by maligning from house to house the new rival and the new practice, thus making themselves a laughing stock, and at the same time effectually doing the work of an advertisement.

A year or two since, there was a fellow in Otsego Co., who was persecuted by the members of the regular profession from his way to the Penitentiary into favor and countenance, and has preserved both his liberty and his employment. Gentlemen, my heart has been pained when I have heard of physicians employed in traducing quacks. Do these men say they wish to save life, and to let the people know the real truth? But will they not discover the real truth without us? Aye, did not the people of Troy, when a quack tore off the breast of a woman in that city, with such cruelty and coarseness as to lay her at once into into the grave? Most assuredly they knew, if left to their own observation. But had the medical men then, from north to south, trumpeted the case and expatiated on the evils of quackery, the salutary and just convictions they already entertained would have been nullified or supplanted by marvelling at the transparent selfishness and littleness of man. And, so in all your circuits. Only be silent, prudent, and, above all, *candid*, whenever a case of homicide occurs around you by the men who have, by the favor of the New York Legislature, become legalized practitioners, and your employers will learn the truth in the end. Let plain farmers and mechanics be left to their own reflections, without the officious help of a fluttering regular, and though, at times, they get off the track, they will come about right in the end.

But I was saying, and saying strongly, that the regular physicians must hold the practice. You have had three or four years' training—bad enough to be sure—each of you, I doubt not, has one or more periodicals keeping up with the profession, you have occasional conferences—not enough, perhaps—at the bed-side of the sick. You can, and should, frequent some medical school—say our excellent one at Albany—you confer often with your medical brethren, and, what is confirmatory of my remarks, you have now the confidence and preference of the great mass of the people.

5th. My next suggestion is that *the members of this Society should be prompt to attend funerals, and to take their place by the side of the clergyman.* I am aware that this may appear trifling. But we have lost all traditional respect. The physician carries with him no dignity, nor distinction from the crowd around him, but that which he has in his head and manners. And it is just and mutually honorable to the friends and family physician, that the latter should be installed by the side of the minister in the last trying office.

6th. To render your hold on the confidence of your employers still more stable, let me suggest, in the next place, *that you be constantly awake to the varieties of constitution.* Thirty years since, the lancet, calomel, tartar-emetic, blisters and opium, embraced the principal remedies in the estimation of many physicians. A medical friend of mine, who settled within a few miles of me, had often from ten to twenty under his care, and whom he bled once or twice monthly for many times,

for what I now suppose was neuralgia in various parts of the body. I witnessed the result, which was most deplorable. I hope there is now not a man in this county who would bleed for simple pain of the side or head. You who have been educated to scrutinize the pulse closely, and make out an individuality to each patient, a particular temperament, cannot imagine the difficulty a man must encounter who had been educated in the antiphlogistic school of Rush and Hosack, in employing both the reducing and tonic courses in meeting his patients during the same day. The reducing course was thoroughly stereotyped in the disciple's mind ; and when disorders seemed to imitate inflammation, he *durst* not administer the necessary stimulants and anodynes. Practitioners now use the whole. If any one has thrown away the lancet, calomel, &c., on the one side ; or quinine, lobelia, or opium, on the other, let me say he has wantonly tied his own hands.

To show how we have lost employment as a class by our want of adapting our remedies to each constitution, allow me to adduce one example. I once lived for years by a large family who were unanimous in the employment of steam doctors. Being a family of good sense, I frequently asked myself the cause of their venturing their lives in the hands of uneducated, untrained men, especially when I knew, what we all know, the sudden deaths that occur occasionally in their treatment. I was at length called to one of the daughters, whom I found with a red face, hot skin, and an intense pain in one side. It was the picture of inflammation. But with all this, the pulse was moderate in frequency, and compressed with very small resistance, showing the case to be purely nervous. I therefore ordered her Dover's powder, compound assafoetida pills, warm drinks and repose. In three or four days she was nearly well. She stated to me she was once seized with a similar combination of symptoms, was bled, took calomel, &c., and never recovered except as nature slowly resumed the supremacy.

I afterwards became so much acquainted with the physical condition and temperament of the family, as to know, and I say it undisguisedly, that they acted wisely in employing steamers rather than men who were inseparably wedded to the depletive course of treatment. Although healthy in appearance, their circulation was so languid, their powers of re-action were so feeble, they were so slow to recover from any severe reduction, that no man could be excusable who disregarded these constitutional traits.

Gentlemen, you know there are some rheumatisms which require high tonics and stimulants from the commencement. There are many neuralgic diseases which so strongly represent inflammation that we cannot be too watchful. Remember, I do not condemn bleeding, calomel, tartar-emetic, &c. On the contrary, I employ them all myself, and could not think of parting with them. I only wish earnestly to inculcate untiring discrimination, that the families who had rather employ you may not be compelled to seek the irregulars through your remissness.

7th. I propose, as the last item in this protracted communication, *the strictest honor in the treatment of each other.* Medical courtesy is

founded on a man's exalted opinion of himself. How can he descend to a mean thing? Called into the sick-room of a patient who is suddenly worse, and whose physician cannot be found, the man who is determined to preserve his own sense of honor, and have peace within, does not even ask whether the absent practitioner is a friend to him. He will not soil his own spirit thus. After a candid examination of the case, having made no inuendoes, no ambiguous inquiries, put no questions which may have two bearings, not shrugged his shoulders, much less openly denounced the whole plan with the medicines, and planted daggers of uneasiness in the hearts that are already distressed; he supplies what is indispensable, speaks as well as he honestly can of the absent physician, and departs.

Now, sirs, what has this man lost by his gentlemanly bearing? Has he lost the good opinion or friendship of the family? No. Of the patient? No. Of the physician? Far from it. As the man advances in life, with uniform adherence to this course, he will continually be gaining friends among his brethren, and increasing calls to assist them in counsel where they are in trouble. And when this man meets with a brother at the bed-side of the sick, how agreeable to the family that no rival bitterness should jeopardize the life of the patient. In this mutual confidence between the different members of the profession, their employers no doubt feel the liveliest pleasure.

The reverse of this picture I will not pain you by drawing. Though but little acquainted, I firmly believe the county of Saratoga has less of the *odium medicum* than is common the world over. In a residence of eight years among you, I have seen but little proof of professional meanness or dishonor. I am sure that nearly all my professional acquaintances are truly honorable men, and from the bottom of their souls despise a mean action.

May we not, in conclusion, express the fervent hope and prayer to Him that directs all events, that this ancient and respected Medical Society of Saratoga, by her honor, harmony, industry, fidelity to the cause, and firm and affectionate support of each other, may obtain the willing applause of all her observers, and stand up respected among the distinguished of the Empire State.

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**ALLEGED HOMŒOPATHIC CURES.**

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—I continue to be a constant reader of your Journal, although I have nearly ceased to practise, prescribing only occasionally for particular friends and acquaintances. I have so little confidence in medicine as a curative agent, that it disqualifies me, if nothing else would, to practise it with success, according to the present notions of the people. In reading a recent No. of the Journal, I felt a little more interest than usual in Dr. Holt's cases, which were treated homœopathically; and on more mature thought, concluded to offer you my views on them, and re-

port one or two cases of my own. It is but justice to Dr. Holt, to say that I think his manner of treating the subject very fair and honorable. He is no doubt sincere in his belief that his course was the right one, and had the proper and desired effect. That his patients got well, I do not doubt; that the medicine cured them, I cannot say. It is proper to say, as did a distinguished professor of medicine, that certain medicines were given for certain diseases, and that the patients got well; and not that the medicine cured them.

The first case which the Dr. reports, was that of a man with a high fever and inflammation of the bowels. This patient had been bled and purged about eighteen hours before he saw him. This, of course, was all that was done, if the report is correct. It is common, however, for most practitioners to do something more, if the symptoms were as severe as stated. Now take the most unfavorable view of the case, and the strong probabilities would be, to every intelligent physician, that the patient would have recovered with only moral management, after being prudently bled and purged.

The second case was one which nature was making strong efforts to cure when the Dr. was called. The evacuations were all favorable, viz., puking, purging and sweating. The first dose produced no effect on the symptoms, and in twenty hours a different medicine was given. Nature was not quite prepared to operate with the first dose, and in the second nature no doubt cured the disease in spite of the medicine, if it had, indeed, any influence at all. This case looks to me verily as if nature was the principal agent in bringing about a restoration.

These cases are valuable in one point—they show the profession how little reliance there should be placed in medicinal agents, and how much on the natural powers of the system. There is one thing which should not be overlooked, which no doubt had a favorable influence on these two patients. They were inspired by hope, that could not be induced by a different class of practitioners. Every physician knows the importance of a quiet hopeful state of mind in his patients, and every thing should be done to this end which is consistent with good principles.

I will now mention a case which has recently fallen under my notice. I was invited to see a lady in a house where I visited as a friend, who was quite sick. Her pulse was about 100, severe headache, furred tongue, restlessness, sickness at the stomach, loathing of food, and a general prostration of the nervous energies. She told me she felt quite sick, but she preferred to take no medicine; she had great prejudice against it, and if she could not live without it, she would die without it. I acquiesced in her views, and told her to keep quiet and cool, and take nothing but water and a little gruel. This she did, and in due time was well. This would have been a triumphant case for homeopathy.

Another case was scarlet fever, the subject of which was a little girl four years old—my own daughter. The case was not of a malignant character. She was usually very well, but was taken suddenly sick in the night with high fever and puking. She complained of her eyes and nose, and the throat was quite red, and as I had for a few days past

been into a house where there was a case of measles, I suspected very strongly this disease. But it was not so, and she grew rapidly worse, developing all the symptoms of scarlet fever. The pulse was from 130 to 140 for the most part of three days, the skin was excessively hot and dry, great intolerance of light, and for three days she took no notice of anything, took not even a particle of gruel, nothing but water. The rash did not come out very full, nor was the throat very sore. This girl entirely recovered, without any medicine except a dose of castor oil after she was able to sit up. If this case had been in a different family from my own, I should have been dismissed for such a course of practice; and even as it was, my wife and other good ladies were exceedingly anxious that something more should be done. When my friends ask me how I can account for certain cures by homœopathic practice, I relate such cases as these I have just reported.

When we take into account that a majority of cases that physicians are called to prescribe for, are far less severe than that spoken of above, we cannot think strange that homœopathy has so many trophies of success.

I hope you will not understand me as being opposed to the use of medicine entirely, for this is not the case. I have, on the other hand, great confidence in its remedial powers, when properly prescribed by judicious and skilful allopathic physicians. I must say, however, notwithstanding the small quantities of medicine now used, there yet needs to be great improvement in this respect.

In conclusion, I wish to report a case second-handed. It was related to me by a distinguished physician of Lowell, and fell under his own observation. He was called to attend upon a little girl with severe inflammation of the eyes, which proved obstinate for some time under the most judicious treatment. One day when he called to see his little patient, and finding the symptoms no better, the mother began to express some anxiety about her daughter, and felt doubtful whether she would ever be any better. She says, "Dr., I have been thinking that something more powerful must be done, or Sarah will soon lose her sight entirely." I have been thinking so myself, says the doctor, and it must be done immediately. Something new was to be done, and satisfaction and confidence were restored. He now prepared some colored water, and ordered it to be given with the most scrupulous exactness as to time and quantity. This had the desired effect. The friends were kept quiet, while nature cured the disease.

JOHN CLOUGH.

June 25, 1846.

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#### FASCINATION OF SERPENTS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—In looking over my Medical Journal of May 6th, my attention was attracted by an article on the Fascination of Serpents, taken from a New York paper, and sent, with an accompanying note, to your Journal.

With your permission, I propose to make a few comments on the novel statement there given, and to cite an article on the fascination of serpents found in the May No. of the Farmer's Journal of Agriculture.

Have serpents the power of fascinating? We all know, to our sorrow, that it is written, that the serpent trailed his wary folds in the garden of Edén—that “he stole the ear of Eve,” and whispered to her a knowledge of good and evil; that she—frail woman—said, the serpent tempted me and I did eat, and that her consort said, the woman tempted me and I did eat.

Now we all know that women charm. But this faculty or power, I contend, is widely different from the alleged power of the serpent. There is, to be sure, a magic in the sparkling eye, the winning voice and way; but this is a natural and mental power. And some will not listen to woman's voice, “charm she never so wisely,” while others listen to the song, and are bound hand and foot by Cupid's chain—his arrows, levelled at the heart, and entering at or about the seventh rib, transfix yet wound it not. And not a few soon learn a knowledge of good and evil, some to their great delight, and others to their irremediable sorrow.

We know that in nature there is much that charms. There is the syren-song of pleasure, the eloquent voice of the orator, the tones of music, and the sweet strains of poetry.

But have serpents the power of charming? Is it probable, as the account states, that the hunting party of soldiers, having surrounded a rattle-snake, and teased him with the points of their bayonets, became giddy and sick, as their physician said, from a stupefying effusion—a poison—which the snake emitted at pleasure? Is it probable that the saliva emitted by said snake was so virulent and concentrated, that the surrounding atmosphere was impregnated with it?—and that these *see homeopathic saliva balls* could produce so powerful a narcotic effect upon the brain? Or were these men peculiarly sensitive to odors, and like some who grow faint at the perfume of flowers, or the fragrance of new mown hay? Might not this giddiness and vomiting be a coincidence, rather than an effect? and be wholly disconnected from any particular odor from said snake—arising, say, from improper food gathered in their foraging tour, or an excess of it, or alcoholic stimulants?

This idea of inhaling poison the writer attempts to corroborate by a statement from one of the same hunting party, who several years afterwards, on entering a room, where two rattlesnakes were exhibited, perceived a similar odor, though not so strong as in the former case, but was so sickened by it, that he was obliged to leave the room. In this instance we can conceive that the odor of decayed leaves, and the offal of the serpents, together with the association of the former circumstance, might have had some effect. But we cannot believe in the one or the other occurrence as proving to a certainty, what was said to be a fact by the physician, viz., that “the snake was charming the men with a stupefying effusion, which they—the snakes—emit at pleasure.”

Because, in the first place, the view is regarded by the writer of the note preliminary to that article, as an hypothesis. Second, if serpents

were possessed of such power, other evidence might and would be adduced to support it. The account in question does not inform us, that any one in the latter case, excepting the individual referred to, became sick, and was obliged to leave the room. Nor have we reason to believe that the effect generally upon persons meeting with rattlesnakes is sickening and stupefying, or charming. There is probably as much in the charming of man, as in the charming of birds by serpents, and the one as well as the other may be accounted for without resorting to hypotheses like the one in question. Without further remarks, we quote the article proposed.

" There is a very general opinion, which has been adopted, even by some eminent naturalists, that several species of serpents possess the power of fascinating birds and small quadrupeds, so that the poor victim is unable to escape from his formidable enemy. Dr. Barton, of Philadelphia, published in 1796 a ' Memoir concerning the fascinating faculty which has been ascribed to the Rattlesnake and other American Serpents,' in which he maintains that this supposed power of fascination does not exist, and offers some ingenious explanations of the origin of what he considers a popular mistake.' Your readers will, we think, be interested by an extract or two from his work.

" ' In conducting my inquiries into this curious subject, I endeavored to ascertain the two following points, viz., what species of birds are most frequently observed to be enchanted by the serpents? and secondly, at what season of the year has any particular species been the most commonly under this wonderful influence? I supposed this would furnish me with a clue to the right explanation of the whole mystery.

" ' Birds have an almost uniform and determinate method of building their nests, whether we consider the form of the nest, its materials, or the place in which it is fixed. Those birds which build their nests upon the ground, on the lower branches of trees, and on low bushes, especially on the sides of rivers, creeks, &c., that are frequented by different kinds of serpents, have most frequently been observed to be under the enchanting faculty of the rattlesnake. Indeed, the bewitching spirit of these serpents seems to be almost entirely limited to three kinds of birds. Hence we so frequently hear tales of the fascination of our cat-bird, which builds its nest in the low bushes, on the sides of creeks and other waters, the most usual haunts of the black snake and other serpents. Hence, too, upon opening the stomachs of some of our serpents, if we often find that they contain birds, it is almost entirely those birds which build in the manner I have just mentioned.

" ' The rattlesnake seldom, if ever, climbs up a tree. He is frequently, however, found about their roots, especially in wet situations. Nature has taught different animals, what animals are their enemies; and as the rattlesnake occasionally devours birds, he must necessarily be an object of fear to them.

" ' In almost every instance, I have found that the supposed fascinating faculty of the serpent was exerted upon the birds at the particular season of their laying their eggs, or of their hatching, or their rearing their young, still tender and defenceless. I now began to suspect that the cries and

fears of birds, supposed to be fascinated, originated in an endeavor to protect their nest or young. My inquiries have convinced me that this is the case.

" I have already observed, that the rattlesnake does not climb up trees ; but the black snake and some other species of the *Coluber* do. When impelled by hunger and incapable of satisfying it by the capture of animals on the ground, they begin to glide up trees or bushes upon which a bird has its nest. The bird is not ignorant of the serpent's object. She leaves her nest, whether it contains eggs or young ones, and endeavors to oppose the reptile's progress. In doing this, she is actuated by the strength of her instinctive attachment to her eggs, or affection to her young. Her cry is melancholy, her motions tremulous. She exposes herself to the most imminent danger. Sometimes she approaches so near the reptile that he seizes her as his prey. But this is far from being universally the case. Often she compels the serpent to leave the tree, and then returns to her nest.

" It is a well-known fact, that among some species of birds, the female, at a certain period, is accustomed to compel the young ones to leave the nest ; that is, when the young have acquired so much strength that they are no longer entitled to *all* her care. But they still claim some of her care. Their flights are awkward, and soon broken by fatigue ; they fall to the ground, when they are frequently exposed to the attacks of the serpent, which attempts to devour them. In this situation of affairs, the mother will place herself upon a branch of a tree, or bush, in the vicinity of the serpent. She will dart upon the serpent in order to prevent the destruction of her young ; but fear, the instinct of self-preservation, will compel her to retire. She leaves the serpent, however, but for a short time, and then returns again. Oftentimes she prevents the destruction of her young, attacking the snake with her wing, her beak or her claws. Should the reptile succeed in capturing the young, the mother is exposed to less danger. For, while engaged in swallowing them, he has neither the inclination or power to seize upon the old one. But the appetite of the serpent tribe is great : the capacity of their stomachs is not less so. The danger of the mother is at hand when the young are devoured ; the snake seizes upon her ; and this is the catastrophe which crowns the tale of *fascination*."

" Some years since, Mr. Rittenhouse, an accurate observer, was induced to suppose, from the peculiar melancholy cry of a *red-winged maize-thief*, that a snake was at no great distance from it, and that the bird was in distress. He threw a stone at the place from which the cry proceeded, which had the effect of driving the bird away. The poor animal, however, immediately returned to the same spot. Mr. Rittenhouse now went to the place where the bird alighted, and, to his great astonishment, he found it perched upon the back of a large black snake, which it was pecking with its beak. At this very time the serpent was in the act of swallowing a young bird, and from the enlarged size of the reptile's belly, it was evident that it had already swallowed two or three young birds. After the snake was killed the old bird flew away. Mr.

R. says that the cry and actions of this bird had been precisely similar to those of a bird which is said to be under the influence of a serpent."

*No. 2 Baldwin Place, Boston.*

JOHN SPENCE, JR.

#### PRECOCIOUS CHILDREN.

To the Editor of the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*:

SIR,—Dr. S. W. Shepard, near Lawrenceville, N. Y., sends me the following description of two precocious children residing in his vicinity. The cases are those of a boy and girl. Dr. S. says—"The boy is about 4 years and 11 months old. He is three feet and four inches high, and weighs fifty-eight pounds. His head is very large. He has considerable beard, as much as boys generally have at 19. His voice is a heavy bass. His intellect does not seem to be prematurely developed. In this respect he does not differ from other children of his age. His countenance is that of an adult—it has no childlike look about it. His testicles and penis are of the usual size of the adult organs; the hair upon the pubes is long but thin. In fact, he appears like an adult dwarf.

"The girl I cannot describe so well, as I never was allowed an examination. She is 3 years and 7 months old, rather large of her age. Her mammae are preternaturally developed. In this respect she has the wonted appearance of a girl of 18." The doctor has been unable as yet to find out whether or not the girl menstruates. He adds, "Their animal desires are fully developed; as a proof of this, they are often seen in the act of coition."

I have only to add, that I know Dr. Shepard to be perfectly reliable, and that his report of these cases agrees with that given me by others. The cases are, I believe, without parallel—all their peculiarities considered. If they are worthy of publication, please give them a place in your widely-circulated Journal.

As ever, yours, &c.

*Castleton, Vt., June 27, 1846.*

MIDDLETON GOLDSMITH.

#### CASE OF CONCEALED DELIVERY.

By S. C. Sewell, M.D., *Lect. on Materia Medica, University McGill College, Montreal.*

On the 16th of November, 1845, at a quarter past 1, P. M., I was called to Mr. K.'s to see his servant, Bridget Cloone, *atæt. 40*, who was said to be suffering from colic and pain in the back. Laying my hand on the abdomen, I perceived that she was about seven or eight months pregnant. On my charging her with the fact, she denied it stoutly, said she had menstruated two months before, and finally, finding that she made no impression on my opinion, she declared, in the most solemn manner, "that whatever was inside of her, it was no child." The reason for this statement will appear presently. I had her removed to the University Lying-in Hospital, whither I went in an hour after, and finding that the physician in ordinary had not arrived, at the matron's request I examined her *per vaginam*, and found the os uteri dilated and the membranes pro-

truding ; presently I detected what appeared to be a cord lying coiled in the upper part of the vagina, and on pulling at it a free extremity came down, but not to the os externum. There were no clots of blood in the vagina. At half past five I returned, and found Dr. McCulloch in attendance ; the child just being born by the feet, and the woman still persisting that there was no child. The child was feeble, but not at all exsanguined. It survived a few hours. To the placenta were attached two cords ; that of the first child had evidently been divided with scissors, from the appearance of the cut surface. Information was given at the police office, that a new-born child had been concealed, for the woman denied that any previous birth had taken place. On searching the bed-room which she had occupied at her master's house, the bed bore evident marks of a delivery having taken place, and on searching her trunk the body of a male child was found, underneath the clothes, which had been very carefully smoothed over it. Care was taken not to disturb the position of the limbs, and the body was removed to the Police Station House.

An inquest was held on the following day, when Dr. McCulloch and I were directed to perform the autopsy, of which the following is the result :—The body was fifteen inches long, and weighed two pounds fifteen ounces avoirdupois. The body was not exsanguined ; there was no fracture of the skull ; the conjunctiva was intensely injected ; the cornea hazy and pupil open.

The body was found on its right side in the box, and was deposited on the same side in the station house ; in consequence, livid patches were observed on that side from the gravitation of the blood.

*External Examination.*—Several marks of injury were found as follows :—One from the right nipple to the point of the shoulder, half an inch broad ; one from the right side of hyoid bone to mastoid process of right temporal bone ; one a little lower, and to the outside, which terminated at the back of the neck ; the fourth commencing to the outside again, went to the middle of the superior costa of the scapula ; the hands were turned up to the head, the right one to the right ear. The nails were formed. The umbilical cord had been divided nine inches from the body, evidently with scissors, and there was no ligature on it. Meconium was protruding from the anus ; the testicles had descended ; the thighs were flexed on the abdomen, and the legs on the thighs.

*Internal Examination.*—The marks of injury before referred to were cut into, and the cellular tissue underneath was found to be red with extravasated blood. An incision was made through the lower lip, and down to the epigastrium, in the mesial line. On dividing the lower lip, the tongue was found protruded more than a line beyond the gums. On opening the thorax, the following observations were made :—The apex of the diaphragm was opposite the fifth rib ; the lateral portions were well descended ; the lungs were of a uniform bright scarlet color, occupying the lateral portions of the thorax, and touching the diaphragm below, but not filling the pleural cavities entirely. The heart and great vessels were nearly in the mesial line, and the cavity of the entire thorax was large for the size of the child ; the lungs crepitated on pressure ;

the lungs, heart and thymus gland were then removed, and, on being put into water, floated ; crepitation occurred under the scalpel ; a portion of lung was squeezed under water, and bubbles issued from every part of the cut surface ; the same was observed on squeezing a portion in air ; nearly half of each lung was removed, and the remainder, with the heart and thymus still attached, was cast into water, when the mass again floated ; portions of lung floated in water ; the cavities of the heart contained dark blood, slightly coagulated ; foramen ovale was closed, but not obliterated.

*Inferences.*—1st. The child had breathed freely.

2d. The marks of injury on the right breast and neck were inflicted during life.

3d. They were, in all probability, occasioned by the left hand of an adult grasping the neck of the infant.

4th. The protrusion of the tongue, and position of the hands, are, probably, referable to strangulation.

5th. Death was not caused by hemorrhage from the cord.

6th. The child was between seven and eight months of utero-gestation.

The rest of the evidence went to show, that Bridget Cloone had been a widow for some years ; that she had carefully concealed her pregnancy ; that she had taken powerful emmenagogue medicines, prescribed by an irregular practitioner, up to the day of delivery, and that she was seen, half an hour before my arrival, to get out of bed, stand by its side, take a pair of scissors from under the pillow, and cut something under the bedclothes.

The coroner's jury brought in a verdict of "wilful murder." The bill of indictment founded thereon was thrown out by the Grand Jury. She was then indicted for concealing the birth of an illegitimate child, convicted, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

The above is an exceedingly important case in the annals of medical jurisprudence ; and cases of the kind are very rare. Under the hope of escaping from the consequences incident to an actual infanticide, of which there is the strongest probability, this woman *persisted to the last that she was not pregnant*, little anticipating that a second child was to furnish its quota of evidence of the birth of a former one a few hours previously. The case furnishes a striking proof of the fact, that a woman may be delivered of one child, of which she may criminally dispose, for the purpose of concealing its birth, and may afterwards be delivered of a second, the life of which may be preserved.—*British American Journal of Medical and Physical Science.*

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## THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

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BOSTON, JULY 15, 1846.

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*Spurious Opium.*—Large quantities of imitation opium, so far as external appearance is concerned, have lately been sold at auction in this

place, which have none of the odor, and, it is fully believed, not one single property of the genuine article. Our attention has been called to the matter by Mr. Cushing, one of the firm of Brewers, Stevens, Cushing & Co., an extensive, far-famed importing drug house, who kindly furnished us with two fair specimens of this very unfair proceeding. By the time this paragraph is in circulation, the spurious stuff will, unquestionably, have been widely distributed in the country. Physicians who dispense their own medicine cannot be deceived, if they will take the simple precaution of tasting and smelling the parcels they may order from the shops. As the best of opium is afforded at a comparatively reasonable price, this is a down-right piece of wickedness, originating, it is presumed, in Turkey, and should not pass unrebuked.

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*Goodwin's Splints.*—Mr. Anson Goodwin, of Ashfield, Mass., manufactures all kinds of splints, of a character so superior, in point of lightness of material, strength, fit, and mechanical adaptation to all varieties of fractures or dislocations of the limbs, that we have examined them with much satisfaction, as another triumph of Yankee ingenuity and usefulness. A few sets only have been taken in Boston, solely because there are no more to be had. The proprietor is a man advanced in years, who fabricates every part of the work with his own hands, and therefore the market will never be surfeited, till the major part of the apparatus is manufactured by machinery. A depot for the sale of these admirable contrivances should be opened at some convenient place in the city, where strangers may avail themselves of the advantages of the invention.

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*New Hampshire Asylum for the Insane.*—Accompanying the report of the Medical Superintendent of this Asylum, is another from the Trustees to the Legislature. After proper explanations of the trials they have had, the favorable condition of the pecuniary affairs of the institution is spoken of, and must be gratifying to the tax-payers of the Commonwealth.

"It will be recollect that the Board of Trustees reported last year the nominal amount of funds of the Asylum to be \$2,673 05. It appears by the present report, that notwithstanding the large increase in the price of provisions, and in most of the articles necessary for the support of the patients; notwithstanding an outlay of about \$600, principally for new furniture, needed on account of the increase of patients, and for other purposes than such as properly belong to the current expenses, the income of the Asylum during the past year has been sufficient to meet all its expenditures, and at the same time to add somewhat to its permanent improvements.

"It appears that of the whole number of inhabitants in the towns from which returns have been received, 1 in every 620 is insane; that the average period of their insanity is between 13 and 14 years. In addition to this, the committee also felt compelled to add, that 'neither the time nor the occasion require them to allude to instances of the aggravated and almost incredible suffering of the insane poor which have come to their knowledge.'

Andrew M'Farland, M.D., the new medical manager, who is the successor to Dr. Chandler, appreciates the responsibilities of his offices, and

exhibits, throughout the first official paper he has drawn up, a just sense of what is proper to say on the topic of insanity. On the 31st of May there were 98 patients in the Asylum, and only five vacant apartments left. The male wing is entirely full, and more applications for admission are made than can possibly be received. Further additions are evidently contemplated. We could say much more in approbation of the first report of the medical superintendent, but it is uncalled for in the State where he resides, and where his reputation is firmly established. In future years, when he has become intimately familiar with the varying phases of that class of minds confided to his special moral training, we shall expect many interesting exhibitions of his ingenuity and skill in regard to the diagnosis and treatment of their diseases.

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*Temperance Address.*—On the 26th of May, which was the eighth anniversary of the Massachusetts Temperance Union, an appropriate address was delivered by Mr. Daniel Kimball, which was a forcible appeal to the consciences of men, and cannot be read without influencing the mind favorably in behalf of the great temperance reformation, still in progress in our country. One feature in Mr. Kimball's pamphlet may operate to its disadvantage, especially with the modern school of non-resistants. He says, at page, 24, "I do believe that the public mind is fully ripe for the measure I have suggested—the making of the sale of intoxicating liquors a penal offence." Leaving him to the care and keeping of the people, alive as they are to the prodigious evil of intemperance, we are certain that one part of the community, viz., physicians, will heartily second any effort that meets with general approbation, for suppressing this curse of the age.

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*Incontinency and its Evils.*—From Rochester, N. Y., a little pamphlet has been received, on the deplorable evils of incontinency. It is by an anonymous author, which will completely defeat the object of the author. If he wishes to influence thoughtless men and women, it is absolutely necessary that they should know who it is that addresses them. People, in these degenerate days, pay but slight attention to voices in the air; and prudent reformers of the public morals need not be ashamed of the cause in which they are engaged. Although we recognize many physiological truths in the tiny pages of this work, there is nothing new in point of fact. But such as it is, and however good the intentions of the author may have been, it may be questioned whether it will not do more harm than good in the community, by teaching the young and inexperienced in regard to abominations of which they were before entirely ignorant. A physician who addresses himself, in his own name, to the intelligence of the community, to apprise society of the existence of physical evils that are brought about by indulging in vicious habits, commands respect, and he is thanked for his words of wisdom, seasonably spoken. But anonymous advisers cannot hope for this result, even where good judgment is shown, and where they most covet influence.

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*Phrenological Hydropathy.*—Our friend O. S. Fowler, Esq., the talented editor of the American Phrenological Journal, is beginning to show

a disposition to favor the cold-water practice. He has admitted one communication on the subject, and afflicted the reader with the prospect of another on the same aquatic theme. Dr. Underhill may be a very honest practitioner of hydropathy, and take large fees for recommending wet sheets in summer complaints, without disturbing his organ of conscientiousness, for aught we know; yet his articles are quite out of place in a purely phrenological publication, where the reader has in past times been regaled with those noble and lofty views which are the characteristics of Mr. Fowler's philosophy. It is not possible to mix hydropathy with phrenology; the oil will rise to the top; and therefore it is not out of place to say that Mr. Fowler's Journal always excites the most pleasure when it breathes his own elevated sentiments, unmixed with the false schemes of adventurers, who would make the unthinking world believe that moonshine is tangible.

**New Hampshire Medical Society.**—The Fellows of the New Hampshire Medical Society held their fifty-sixth annual meeting in Concord on the 2d ult. The attendance was large, and the transactions in the highest degree interesting. Able papers on medical subjects were read by Drs. D. Crosby, J. G. Graves and Albert Smith. The following is a list of officers elected for the ensuing year:—

Josiah Bartlett, *President*; P. P. Woodbury, *Vice President*; C. P. Gage, *Secretary*; S. Cummings, *Treasurer*.

R. P. I. Tenney, C. P. Gage, E. B. Hammond, A. F. Carr, C. F. Elliott, A. P. Stackpole, D. Flanders, J. G. Graves, J. Eastman, E. B. Gale, G. B. Twitchell, J. Batchellor, E. R. Peaslee, C. B. Hamilton, *Councillors*.

N. Wight, O. French, J. A. Wood, A. Smith, E. B. Moore, T. Bassett, A. O. Dickey, J. Hosford, T. Brown, W. J. Campbell, A. Twitchell, J. Batchellor, L. G. Hill, J. W. Cowan, *Censors*.

J. Cummings, J. C. Eastman, E. R. Peaslee, J. Crosby, J. B. Abbott, F. P. Fitch, J. H. Smith, *Corresponding Secretaries*.

P. P. Woodbury, S. Cummings, *Orators for 1847*. C. F. Elliott, Ed. Spaulding, *Substitutes*.

A. Smith, D. Flanders, *Delegates to attend Medical Examinations at Dartmouth College*.

John Hubbard, M.D., of Hallowell, Me., was elected an honorary member, and C. C. Tibbets a Fellow of the Society.

**Worcester Lunatic Hospital.**—Dr. Samuel B. Woodward, who has so long and so ably presided over the Massachusetts State Lunatic Hospital, having resigned, Dr. George Chandler, for six or eight years Dr. Woodward's Assistant Physician in the Hospital, and subsequently for some time Superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum at Concord, N. H., has been appointed Superintendent in his stead, and will soon assume the discharge of the duties of that responsible station.

**Rhode Island Medical Society.**—At the annual meeting of the Rhode Island Medical Society, holden at the Senate Chamber in the State House,

Providence, Wednesday, June 24th, 1846, the following gentlemen were elected officers for the ensuing year:—

Dr. Lewis L. Miller, *President*; Dr. Jabez Holmes, *1st Vice President*; Dr. David King, *2d Vice President*; Dr. Charles W. Parsons, *Recording Secretary*; Dr. Hiram Allen, *Corresponding Secretary*.

Important alterations were made in the by-laws. The annual meetings are hereafter to be held in Providence, and a semi-annual meeting on the last Wednesday in December, at such place as the Society, at the previous annual meeting, may appoint. The election of officers, moreover, is to be annual, instead of triennial.

*Muscles of the Glass-snake.*—In the July No. of the American Journal of Science and the Arts, is a paper by W. M. Carpenter, M.D., of the Medical College of Louisiana, on the peculiar arrangement of the muscular apparatus of the ophiasurus, with diagrams, which explain very satisfactorily how the glass-snake can be broken into pieces at the caudal part of its body, without injury to the essential vital organs. Dr. Carpenter has certainly made a dark subject plain as noon day. Any anatomist or naturalist had better pay a year's subscription for the above work than not understand the beautiful mechanism nature has introduced into the structure of this obscure, fragile reptile.

*Dr. Waterman Pardon.*—Dr. Waterman, whose sentence to the State Prison for three years, for being accessory to the disinterment of subjects for dissection, was noticed in a previous No. of our Journal, has been pardoned by Gov. Wright.—*Buffalo Med. Journ.*

*To Correspondents.*—Dr. Dix's cases of disease of the eye, Dr. Miller's case of eclampsia parturientum, Dr. Gillette's remarks on typhus fever, Dr. Ingalls's reply to J. C., and Dr. Wilder's case of homoeopathic treatment, are on file for publication.

*Report of Deaths in Boston*—for the week ending July 11th, 63.—Males, 35, females, 28. Stillborn, 15. Of consumption, 11—measles, 8—intemperance, 2—teething, 2—disease of the bowels, 3—paralysis, 2—convulsions, 2—lung fever, 2—scrofula, 2—canker, 1—delirium tremens, 1—drowned, 1—typhus fever, 2—pleurisy fever, 2—Inflammation of the brain, 3—infantile, 2—Inflammation of the bowels, 1—accidental, 1—hooping cough, 1—dropsy, 2—disease of the heart, 1—smallpox, 2—old age, 1—childbed, 2—gravel, 1—Inflammation of the stomach, 1—suicide, 1—cancer, 1—scarlet fever, 1—sudden (drinking cold water), 1—debility, 1.

Under 5 years, 27—between 5 and 20 years, 3—between 20 and 40 years, 31—between 40 and 60 years, 8—over 60 years, 4.

#### REGISTER OF THE WEATHER,

Kept at the State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Mass. Lat. 42° 15' 49". Elevation 483 ft.

June.	Therm.	Barometer.	Wind.	June.	Therm.	Barometer.	Wind.				
1	from 51 to 76	from 29.37 to 29.42	N E	16	from 62 to 76	from 29.33 to 29.37	S E				
2	62	60	29.25	29.33	S W	17	56	77	29.40	29.40	S W
3	64	78	29.25	29.32	N W	18	57	83	29.33	29.40	S W
4	65	85	29.22	29.32	S W	19	65	86	29.17	29.25	S W
5	68	80	29.03	29.11	S W	20	58	68	29.11	29.11	N E
6	69	79	29.04	29.23	N W	21	54	64	29.05	29.05	N E
7	59	73	29.37	29.51	N W	22	50	54	29.06	29.25	N W
8	54	73	29.59	29.66	S W	23	47	57	29.33	29.41	N W
9	52	79	29.70	29.76	N E	24	46	67	29.43	29.57	N W
10	51	82	29.38	29.60	S W	25	50	69	29.39	29.40	N E
11	58	80	29.29	29.30	N W	26	54	66	29.20	29.24	N E
12	56	68	29.44	29.71	N E	27	53	66	29.27	29.39	N E
13	44	76	29.65	29.74	S E	28	57	76	29.38	29.38	S W
14	59	81	29.40	29.54	S W	29	64	80	29.34	29.38	S W
15	64	87	29.23	29.30	S W	30	62	85	29.36	29.38	S W

Range of Thermometer, from 41° to 87°. Barometer, from 29.04 to 29.76. Rain, 2.37 inches.

**Fecundity of French Inhabitants near Fort Kent, Me.**—They marry at an early age, particularly the females. One couple, who dwell a short distance from the Fort, was married when the husband was 13 and the wife 14 years of age; an instance occurred, since my residence in the country, of the marriage of a girl of 13 years, who had never menstruated, and this I am told is by no means uncommon.

Some of the families are rather remarkable in point of numbers. Twelve living within a mile of the garrison, and taken without exception, have had in all 93 children, and been married, in the aggregate, 162 years; a child every  $20\frac{1}{2}$  months. The wife of Jacques Cainel (the father of one of these families) has been married 11 years, and had 7 children, all now living, except the oldest, who died at the age of 4 years. During the whole of these 11 years, she has never seen her monthly periods but once. Her second child was born exactly nine months after her first accouchement, her third the same period after her second. She has always been in the habit of nursing her children from one birth to another.

Burgoyne, wt. 59, residing at Green River, has had 20 children—18 by his first wife, 2 by his second. She is now enceinte. His eldest daughter has been married ten years, and has had 8 children. His mother had three pair of twins.

Larent Terriand, at the same place, has had 26 children by one wife; the mother had her last infant at the age of 53.

Buonaventure Le Crog, in 18 years, had 19 children; of these, five pair were twins.

Thibadeaux, now 66 years of age, had had 23 children by two wives, 10 by the first, 12 by the second. Buonaventure Lisott, at the age of 27, married Julia Martin at 19. He is now 51, she 43. They have had 17 children; and 4 pair were twins.

Jerman Ceie has had 22 children; all single births; his wife was married at the age of 14, and is now 43.

Jerman Michaux has had 20 children by two wives; the youngest of these is 4 years of age. He is now 59, she 45 years of age.

The wife of Isaac Bialette, 42, has had 19 children.

Mr. Webber, the Massachusetts Land Agent, who took the census in 1830, saw in one log hut, a woman with 5 children under  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years; one twin, and one triplet birth. She was then pregnant a third time.

They are attended during their confinements, by the older women, some of whom have acquired considerable reputation in the management of obstetrical cases. They do not hesitate, when the labor does not progress with sufficient rapidity, to seize upon the presenting part and effect the delivery with main force. In an arm presentation, the midwife fairly tore the child to pieces, effecting a delivery by means of a common kitchen pothook, and, what is rather singular, the mother recovered without any serious trouble resulting. They leave their beds often within twenty-four hours after the birth of the child, to attend to their customary household employments. In consequence of this, their rapid child-bearing, and the hard labor to which they are occasionally subjected, the great majority of the females, particularly when advanced in life, suffer from prolapsus uteri and leucorrhœa. Uterine hemorrhages are also of very frequent occurrence.—ALEXANDER S. WOTHERSPOON, M.D., in *New York Journal of Medicine*.